

**Governor's State Trails Council Meeting**  
**April 18, 2005**  
**Governor's Conference Room, 116 East State Capitol**  
**Madison, WI**  
**10:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.**

**State Trails Council Members Present:** Tom Huber, Mike McFadzen, Christopher Kegel, David Phillips, Ramsey Lee, Tom Thornton, Randy Harden

**DNR Staff Present:** Bill Smith, Peter Biermeier, Brigit Brown, Joe Renville, Jeremy Leitz, Bill Engfer

**WI Legislators Present:** Mark Pettis, Gary Hebl

**Others present:** Luana Schneider, John Schnorr, Joe Parr, Tom Gilbert, Karen Kroll, Rick Marolt, Rob McConnell, Ken Linzmeyer, Gene Larson, John Watson, Amanda Cottrell, Jay Larson, Pat Jacobosky

**State Trails Council Members Not In Attendance:** Connie Loden, Ken Carpenter

**10:00 A.M.: Welcome and Introductions**

Mike McFadzen welcomed and thanked everyone for coming. Introductions were given.

**10:15 A.M.: Agenda Repair and Approval of January Meeting Minutes**

Mike McFadzen indicated that the agenda was good. Comments were sought regarding the January meeting minutes. None were given.

**Outcome:** Tom Thornton made a motion to accept the minutes and was seconded by Dave Phillips. Minutes accepted.

**10:30 A.M.: Chair Report by Mike McFadzen**

Due to a very effective campaign, the Governor restored the Trails and Parks positions in his version of the budget. The campaign included formal Resolutions sent to Governor Doyle and the Dept. of Administration from the State Trails Council (STC) and the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation Board Of Directors, formal contacts made to the Governor's office, and a letter sent to the Governor.

**Outcome:** Recognition was given for all who helped in the campaign to restore the Parks and Trails positions and funding. Peter Biermeier gave a special recognition to Mike McFadzen for his involvement with the campaign to restore the trails positions.

Randy Harden was recognized and welcomed as the new representative for Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV).

The terms for Mike McFadzen, Tom Huber, Chris Kegel, David Phillips, and Connie Loden will end in July of 2005. Mindy from the Governor's office will send out a notice to these individuals. If one wants to reapply, fill out the form and return it to Mindy. Mike McFadzen discussed logging, and the possible effects, on trails, specifically the Razorback Ridges Trail, which the Sayner Lions Club runs. Chris Kegel indicated that logging in the Southern Kettle Moraine occurred and was a minor problem but worked out nicely in the end. Dave Phillips said it was mainly a problem with county forests. He also indicated that one should use the policy accepted by the Forestry Association that was used successfully in Lincoln County.

**Next Step:** The State Trails Council will continue to monitor logging on trails and the topic will be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

Changing the meeting date from Mondays and Fridays was openly discussed. It was indicated that these are usually travel days for legislators and may not be the best time to schedule the April STC meeting. Ramsey Lee, Dave Phillips, and Tom Thornton indicated that Fridays were best for them. Randy Harden, Tom Huber, and Chris Kegel indicated they were flexible on meeting dates.

**Outcome:** Since the meeting dates were already set for the remainder of 2005, a change may not occur until the January 2006 meeting.

Mike McFadzen and the STC gave special recognition to Joe Parr for his service as a STC member for 5 years.

Mike McFadzen indicated he talked with Heather White of Senator Russ Feingold's office. It seems that the Great Outdoors Act is dead in the water for this session, but Senator Feingold will support it when it comes back up. RTP (Recreational Trails Program) is \$503 million over 6 years in the House and \$206 million over 6 years in the Senate. It is unlikely that the larger federal Highway Bill, of which RTP is part, will be passed before the end of 2005.

The resolution in support of Jonathan Ela passed and thanks were given to those made contacts in support of Mr. Ela.

It was discussed that STC Resolutions should be sent to more people. Council members should help in making contacts and distributing resolutions.

The issue of snowmobile deaths was discussed at length. Last snowmobile season there were 36 deaths in WI. The STC is concerned and sees this as a safety issue. A draft resolution was written by Mike McFadzen and Tom Thornton regarding this issue and the stance the STC should take.

The American Legion/Northern Highlands Master Plan is out for public comment and until June 1.

**Action:** STC members should read and provide comments.

**11:00 A.M.: Peter Biermeier (WiDNR Bureau of Parks and Recreation)**

President Bush's budget cuts all LAWCON (Land and Water Conservation) funding. This is used to buy real estate, playgrounds, campgrounds, etc. The Ice Age Park and Trail Reserve Funding (which is separate from the Ice Age National Scenic Trail) was completely cut in President Bush's budget as well. This is funding used to administer the Ice Age National Scenic Reserve's nine units, several of which are state parks.

The WI State budget should be done by July 1st, which is fairly timely. The State Parks and Recreation Bureau is losing one senior management position at the central office. There will be fee increases for deer and fish licenses, a \$2 increase for general camping, and an increase in park admission stickers.

Administrative Code 45 changes are complete and go into effect May 1. There were no significant changes impacting the overall State Trail system.

The 2005-2010 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) will be done sometime in mid-2006 and signed by the Governor September 2006. It was indicated this could be the last SCORP as it is funded by LAWCON, which the funding for was eliminated.

In regard to the State Trail Pass Policy, the State Park System will only charge (within park properties) for selected properties that are known as destination sites for cross-country skiing, mountain biking, and horseback riding. There will be no fee if the Friends Group runs the trail.

The State Parks and Trails Strategic Plan is a five-year plan that will describe what the system will look like and will feed off of SCORP. State Parks is looking to expand the number of electrical sites from 25% of all sites to 50%. Also being dealt with is the growing use of ATV's. The State Park System is looking on how they can handle it. Town Hall meetings will be held across the state to allow public input on the future of the Wisconsin State Park System. Notification will of these meetings will be sent out to STC.

Federal Access Issues. At this time the federal Access Board and the US Forest Service are both working on trail accessibility guidelines. Right now, though, there are no standard trail accessibility guidelines for states to follow. The Forest Service's Trail Accessibility Guidelines (FSTAG) have been out for public review (deadline for comments 4/18/2005) and can be viewed on the Internet:  
<http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/accessibility>.

A Trails Construction Workshop for trail providers will be held on June 15 and 16, 2005 in Oconomowoc.

**Action:** Invitations will be sent out to all trail managers.

Bill Smith was introduced by Peter Biermeier and referred a question about hunting fee increases to him. Bill responded that the legislature will pass something, but it is not known at this time what it will be. If the department does not get the fee package, then certain programs will have to be cut. There has been no increase in 9 years. Randy Harden noted that the affect of no increase will be felt by all outdoorsman.

In response to a question by Mike McFadzen, Peter Biermeier indicated a camping code change that will require people who make reservations to occupy the site. This will likely take effect January 1, 2006.

Brigit Brown stated that new real estate purchase is being negotiated that would add 6 miles to the Hank Aaron State Trail in Milwaukee, four miles to the Crandon to White Lake State Trail, extending DNR ownership of the trail into the city of Crandon. Another acquisition in negotiation would allow for the extension of the Military Ridge State Trail from Fitchburg to Madison. This purchase would provide alternative transportation routes in and around Madison.

Mike McFadzen asked for solutions to obtain the missing link in the Hank Aaron State Trail. Brigit Brown noted they were working on ownership issues and development rights to obtain the missing section.

Bill Smith noted that extending the Hank Aaron State Trail is a big and wonderful idea. Dave Phillips asked if it will connect with the Glacial Drumlin State Trail. It was noted that it does not, but plans are to eventually connect the two trails. Peter Biermeier indicated that the Hank Aaron State Trail is increasing and driving business activity.

#### **12:00 P.M.: State Trails PowerPoint Presentation/Briefing of Legislators by Mike Mcadzen**

Mike McFadzen gave a presentation describing the State Trails of WI. The presentation included an overview of the State Trails System, the State Trails Strategic Plan, and the health, transportation, and economic benefits of State Trails.

Bill Smith thanked everyone for the invitation and left shortly after the presentation.

Mike McFadzen did the presentation again as Representatives Mark Pettis and Gary Hebl came after lunch. Mark Pettis asked when peak usage occurs on trails. Mike McFadzen indicated it was from May through October.

Mark Pettis then discussed the future of Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Parks. He indicated there are many areas in the state where gravel mining occurred. Owners of these areas are required to terrace the sides and plant native species to remediate the site.

This applies to the landowner when the land is inactive. This can be very expensive. One option could be to instead turn these lands into OHV parks.

Luanna Schneider asked who would assume responsibility for the OHV Parks. Mark Pettis responded that it is public land and we do not want them (current landowner) to assume total responsibility. One option is to look for a 501(C)3/4 organization that would qualify to run the facility with limited liability. Personal liability is a big issue that may scare people from developing OHV parks. One option is to have groups incorporate, like Friends groups. Randy Harden will talk with his user group about OHV parks. Peter Biermeier indicated that the Department of Natural Resources could be convinced that ATV/OHV parks could be safe.

### **1:30 P.M.: Brigit Brown: Introduction of Proposed Bylaws**

Brigit Brown indicated that the changes in the new bylaws are primarily editorial changes. Highlights include to working more with ad-hoc groups, not just standing committees, having the committee reports be more reflective of what the agenda actually states, and responsibilities of staff and board members. The number of votes necessary for a quorum is much clearer in the new bylaws. It states that a majority of those in position (section IV. C. 1.).

Mike McFadzen asked if there was anything included about responsibility of Council members, such as networking and consulting with user groups. Brigit indicated there was not, but this will be discussed in July.

Dave Phillips asked whether there was anything in the bylaws about being able to add a member to reflect another user group. Brigit responded that this would require a statutory change. There are nine members on the board and these nine can represent any user groups, as long as the appointees are active trail users.

Chris Kegel asked if a STC member could appoint someone as a substitute if the original member cannot attend. If so, can this person vote? Something will be drafted in regards to this for the next meeting and set out to everyone.

**Next steps:** Vote on amendment at next meeting and vote on whether or not to incorporate this into the bylaws.

The new bylaws will be voted on at the next meeting in July.

### **2:00 P.M.: Jeremy Leitz: Introduction of Draft Wisconsin Trails Safety and Etiquette Brochure**

Jeremy introduced a draft of a brochure describing proper trail etiquette and safety for trails user groups. There is a section for all users, followed by sections for the various user groups on WI trails. There is also a safety section for all users. The goals of the brochure are to educate user groups about other trail uses, and to minimize conflicts and

friction on trails between user groups. After presenting comments and questions were taken.

Karen Kroll indicated that in mountain biking section, the last sentence indicates that a mountain biker should use a bell or horn to warn others. She noted this was a bad idea around horses, and one should use only your voice.

Randy Harden indicated that all ATV's should have U.S. Forest Service approved spark arrestors.

Mike McFadzen asked who yields in the case of motorized use (snowmobiles) and cross-country skiers. The brochure indicates that faster users yield to slower users. Mike said that in practice it easier for cross-country skiers to hear snowmobiles, so the skier yields.

**Next step:** Mike will consult with cross-country skiers for advice.

A discussion about proper hand signals was held. Are they the same for all user groups? Should these be included in the brochure?

**Next step:** Jeremy and Brigit will look into whether or not to include them.

All STC members and others present were asked to review the brochure and send comments back to Jeremy by April 29, 2005.

### **2:30: Other Business of the State Trails Council**

Mike McFadzen stated that the number of snowmobile deaths in WI is a huge problem. Tom Thornton indicated that the Snowmobile Council is in full agreement. The draft snowmobile resolution indicating that the State Trails Council formally support legislation to make snowmobile trails and tourism safer in the state of Wisconsin was read aloud by Mike. The resolution states:

**Outcome:** Ramsey Lee made a motion to accept the resolution, Chris Kegel seconded the motion. The resolution passed. Tom Huber abstained from the vote due to Department of Transportation issues.

Dave Phillips asked if the law was changed so that violations received while operating a motorboat would be linked to the person's driving record. Bill Engfer indicated that this has been suggested, but not enacted.

Bill Engfer stated that three things that have helped make snowmobiling safer in Minnesota: enforcement of speed limits, linking snowmobile violations to the individual's driver's record, and the philosophical support of user groups. Bill suggested that the Department of Natural Resources should look at changing their education and enforcement efforts.

Randy Harden stated that getting the user groups and businesses to buy-in to the educational effort could be greatly beneficial. He noted that it is already occurring with motorcycles and the STC should wait and see if it is successful.

Dave Phillips stated that all recreational vehicles should be included, so as not to appear to be picking on one user group. It was stated that alcohol is involved in snowmobile accidents 85-90% of the time, 20-25% in ATV accidents, and 33% in overall accidents.

Peter Biermeier stated that the Department of Natural Resources-Bureau of Parks and Recreation wants to infuse broader viewpoints into counties regarding trails via SCORP. There is a possibility of 1,800 miles of abandoned railroad coming to the Department in 10-15 years. SCORP should be tied into these trails.

#### **2:45: Public Comment**

Luana Schneider indicated her support of Randy Harden on the State Trails Council. She asked if snowmobile issues in Minnesota can be used in Wisconsin to drive points across. She extended an invite to everyone to a March of Dimes Rally on September 10, 2005 at the Langlade County Forest. She also indicated that she was excited to hear a discussion on OHV parks. She thanked the committee for allowing her to attend.

The Equestrian Land Conservation Resource Group is conducting a project on National Trails Day (June 4, 2005). Projects are occurring at Governor Dodge State Park, in Western Dane County, and in Lodi. There is a new effort to pull more equestrian users to do trail projects. Mike McFadzen stated that it is great to see user groups out doing projects.

Peter Biermeier noted that National Trails Day is seeing more and more activities occur. Activities do not need to be trail maintenance or clean-ups, but can also be for advocacy and education.

Rob McConnell asked for an update on the Badger State Trail. Brigit Brown stated that it is currently being Master Planned. There should be some preliminary information by the end of April, 2005. More solid information will be available this summer.

Bill Engfer thanked everyone for the invite and the discussions. He indicated a willingness to help in regard to enforcement and education issues.

#### **3:00: Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn was made by Tom Huber, and seconded by Chris Kegel.

**Outcome:** Meeting adjourned.